

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

Application ID: 13AC145030

Program Name: VetCorps

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) The applicant evidences need among the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh student veterans as well as the veterans, families of veterans, and military families in the four-county Fox River Valley Region of northeast Wisconsin. This region's total current population is approximately 640,667, and of that 43,711 are veterans.

(+) The applicant provides strong support for why they selected the target population for the proposed AmeriCorps program – veterans and members of military families. The applicant states there has been a 200% increase in the number of students who are veterans or members of military families. Because of this the applicant has enhanced its services and support for veterans and was ranked seventh in the United States for military friendliness. The proposed AmeriCorps program will place 22 of these veterans and/or members of military families as AmeriCorps members in the VetCorps.

(+) The applicant provides persuasive evidence that Wisconsin veterans are disproportionately unemployed (15% compared to 6.7% statewide) and provides the source of that information (Wisconsin Department of Veteran's Affairs).

(+) The applicant states that veterans have a more difficult time in degree attainment compared to non-veteran students based on the 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement, evidencing need among target population.

(+) The applicant describes AmeriCorps members' roles and activities and provides specific examples including providing: (1) veteran-specific services in nonprofits that do not have that expertise (information, organizational support, and veteran-specific referrals) (2) school-based mentors (help with school work, organization, and problem-solving); (3) volunteer recruitment and placement of veterans in VA Medical Centers; and (4) supplementing existing services in nonprofits.

(+) The applicant provides samples of AmeriCorps roles and responsibilities with Oshkosh Truancy Intervention Program, American Red Cross, Goodwill Industries, and University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh Veterans Resource Center.

(+) The applicant will use 22 quarter-time AmeriCorps members to enroll 22 quarter-time Members (5.82 MSY) who will leverage 150 additional volunteers. An AmeriCorps member, tasked with leading the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh Military Ambassador Program, will be the direct point of contact for assisting student veterans with the GI Bill. The AmeriCorps member will provide assistance with job searches, education planning and labor market research, resume writing, and interviewing. The VETS4VETS program, which is operated by AmeriCorps members, will urge veterans to use peer support to express their emotions, manage their challenges, and ease their reintegration into society.

(+) The applicant provides evidence of the effectiveness of interventions by citing a Civic Enterprises report documenting the fact that veterans who volunteer will have more successful transitions into civilian and home life than those who do not. In response to whether the transition was going well, 55% of veterans who volunteered responded positively, as compared to only 47% who did not. The report also recommends that communities provide meaningful service opportunities to assist veterans in defining themselves as civilians and smoothing the transition.

(+) The applicant explains that targeted Member activities will result in an increase in the number of veterans and military service members and their families served by CNCS programs. Such activities will also result in an increase in the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through VetCorps-supported programs. According to the applicant, results will include an increase in volunteers who are veterans and military family members, an increase in the ability of nonprofits to serve veterans and members of military families, more successful integration of Vet Corps members into civilian life, and an increase in Members' professional skills.

(+) The applicant describes the overall change they expect to see in VetCorps members; for example, the performance measures state that 18 (of 22) Members will demonstrate an increase in professional skills and 18 will demonstrate an increase in indicators of successful integration into civil life while participating in the proposed AmeriCorps program.

(-) In the proposed AmeriCorps program, VetCorps members will be placed in local nonprofit organizations to provide services directly to organization clients and provide information and support to organizations related to serving veterans but the applicant does not identify the impact of this on the nonprofit organization or on the clients the organizations serve.

(-) The applicant states that the proposed program will result in an increased number of veterans and members of military families volunteering, increasing the ability for nonprofits to serve veterans and military families, leading to more successful reintegration after deployment; the applicant does not provide information on how what they are doing will be different than what they could do without AmeriCorps members

(-) The applicant does not provide a clear description of what the AmeriCorps members' roles will be at each partner nonprofit organization identified in the application.

(-) The applicant indicates that AmeriCorps members will support nonprofits' missions while also acting as key resources for veterans and military families. AmeriCorps members will also be available to manage volunteers, and clients to provide information, organizational support, and veteran-specific referrals; however the applicant does not provide specific examples of how they intend to do this.

